

Michigan
Self-Assessment

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

**Continuous Improvement
Monitoring Process**



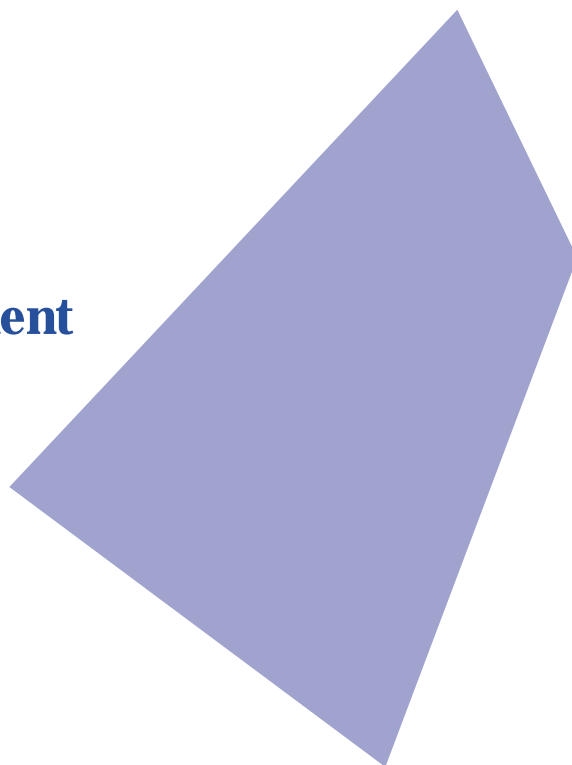
Office of Special Education
and Early Intervention Services

January 2001

Michigan *Self-Assessment*

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Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process



Accountability and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of State and local efforts for providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, and for providing a free appropriate public education to children and youth with disabilities.

The Michigan Department of Education, by law, has obligations to respond to the oversight requirements of the Office of Special Education Programs and to exercise oversight in the administration of services to infants and toddlers, children and youth with disabilities, and their families in Michigan.

This oversight requires the use of various processes for accountability, including measurement of compliance with the federal regulations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In addition, new emphasis has now been placed on improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities, and their families.

In order to answer questions about compliance and questions regarding educational outcomes, the Office of Special Education Programs has worked with states, parents, advocates, and other key stakeholders to shape its accountability work in a way that drives and supports improved results, as well as maintaining the protection of individual rights. This accountability focus has led to the development of a Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process.

***“Despite the
tendency of the
bureaucracy to
stifle it, the spirit
of the law is alive
and well thanks to
collaboration of
all stakeholders.”***

—Greg Gwisdalla

“Through this process I’ve learned the importance of being able to hear what others are saying and give them time to be heard.”

—Denise McGarr

Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process

The Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is based on several themes, including:

- ◆ continuity—an effective accountability system must be continuous rather than episodic;
- ◆ partnership with stakeholders—those who are involved/impacted by the system must be represented in the assessment and improvement;
- ◆ self-assessment—states work with stakeholders to implement an assessment process that is focused on improving outcomes;
- ◆ data-driven—available data, including quantitative and qualitative information, are used to assess the State system and its impact; and
- ◆ public process—broad dissemination of the process and its results.

Stages of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process include:

- ◆ State self-assessment—a State Steering Committee works with the Michigan Department of Education to analyze available data and assess various components;
- ◆ validation planning—the State Steering Committee works with the Michigan Department of Education and the United States Department of Education to plan strategies for validating the self-assessment results;
- ◆ validation data collection—the United States Department of Education collects data and presents it to the Steering Committee and the Michigan Department of Education in a structured conference and plans the reporting process;
- ◆ reporting to the public—the United States Department of Education’s report reviews the State’s performance and is made available to the public;
- ◆ improvement planning—the Steering Committee and the Michigan Department of Education develop an improvement plan that addresses both compliance and improvement of results for children with disabilities, and includes time lines, benchmarks, and methods to verify improvements; and
- ◆ verification and consequences—the Michigan Department of Education works with the United States Department of Education to determine data to be collected to demonstrate that areas of noncompliance are corrected and desired results achieved.

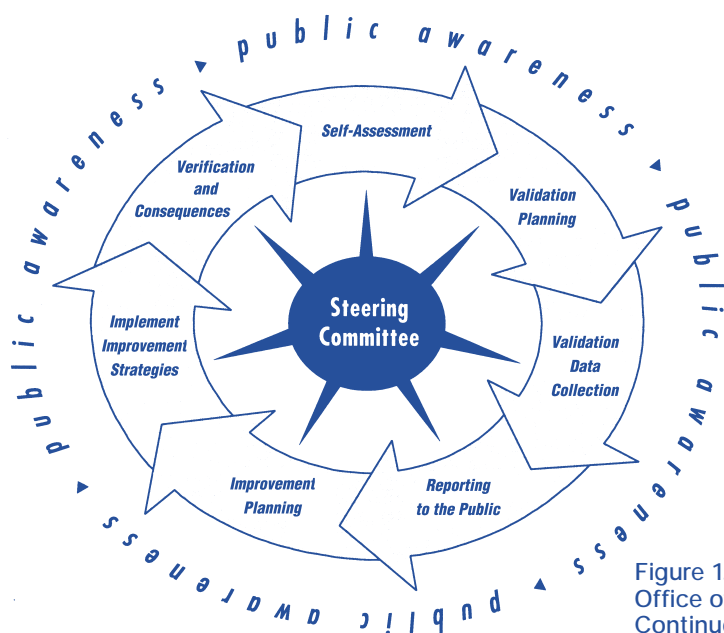


Figure 1.
Office of Special Education Programs
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process

Office of Special Education Programs

Cluster Areas

The Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process assesses a state's implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements. These key requirements are identified in cluster areas for both Part B/special education and Part C/early intervention services, known in Michigan as *Early On*®. Each cluster consists of a list of components that reflect statutory and regulatory requirements and/or performance indicators. In addition, each component has a list of indicators; these include system design indicators, procedural indicators, and/or outcome indicators, typically in combination.

TABLE 1
Office of Special Education Programs Cluster Areas
for Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Part B Cluster Areas	Part C Cluster Areas
General Supervision	General Supervision
Free and Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment	Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments
Secondary Transition	Early Childhood Transition
Parent Involvement	Family-Centered Services
	Comprehensive Public Awareness and Child Find

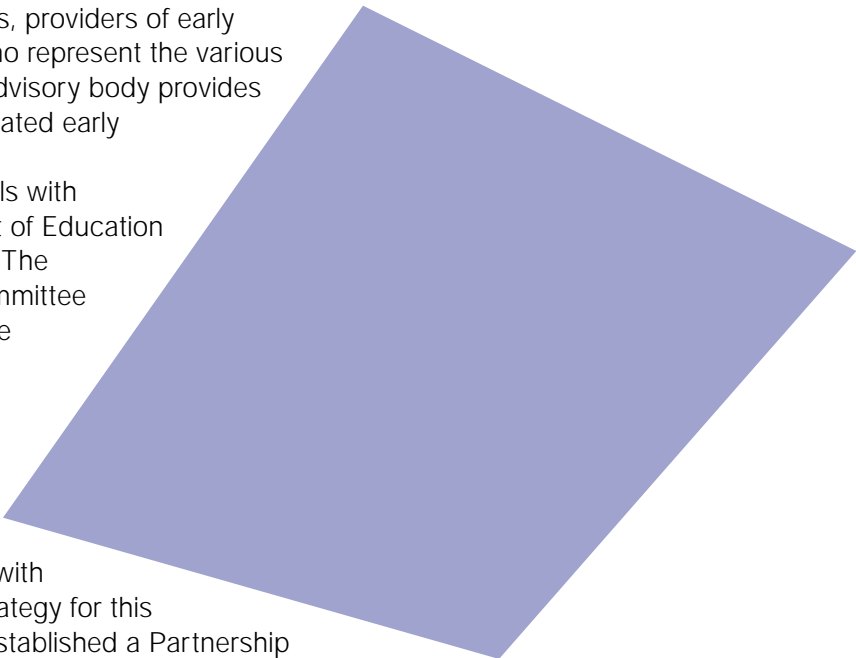
Steering Committee

Central to the entire process is a Steering Committee, which includes representatives of all stakeholders in the delivery system. This has been of particular importance in Michigan, as the self-assessment included both special education and early intervention services/*Early On*.

Under the requirements of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Michigan Department of Education supports a State Interagency Coordinating Council. The 27 members of the State Interagency Coordinating Council are Governor-appointed and include parents, providers of early intervention services, state agencies, and others who represent the various components of an early intervention system. This advisory body provides recommendations on the implementation of coordinated early intervention services.

Under the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Michigan Department of Education supports a Special Education Advisory Committee. The 30 members of the Special Education Advisory Committee are State Board of Education-appointed and include parents, persons with disabilities, teachers, related services providers, administrators, advocacy groups, and others. This advisory body provides recommendations on unmet needs in the state relative to special education.

Michigan has been awarded a State Improvement Grant under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As an implementation strategy for this grant, the Michigan Department of Education has established a Partnership



that serves, in part, as an advisory body. The 15 members of this advisory body make recommendations based on the personnel development priorities of the State Improvement Grant. These advisors also review whether intended impacts on systemic factors and student outcomes are achieved through the State Improvement Grant.

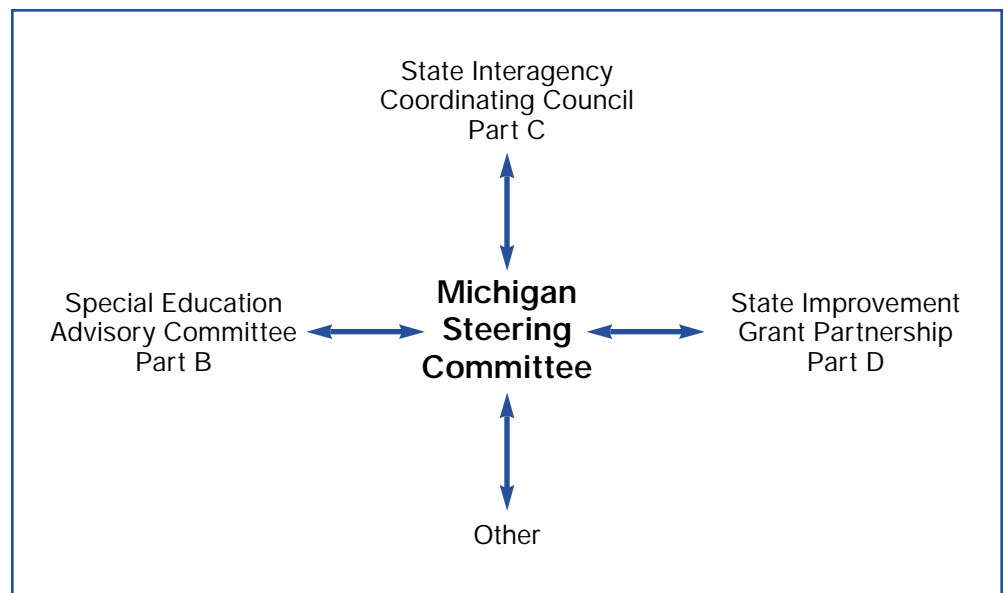
In order to create a link to the work of each advisory group, representatives of the State Interagency Coordinating Council, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the State Improvement Grant Partnership constituted the core of the Steering Committee.

Other members were added that receive federal funds, either directly or through state grants, related to the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its protections: Parent Training and Information Centers (Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education and United Cerebral Palsy–Metro) and Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service. Organizations that represent administrators and providers within the system and who are directly accountable for implementation of the law were also specifically identified, such as the Michigan Education Association, Michigan Federation of Teachers and the Michigan Association of School Administrators.

“We are facing many of the same challenges. We know a lot already collectively about what to do—we need to do it.”

—Mark McWilliams

Figure 2.
Michigan Steering Committee
for the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process



Implementing the Process in Michigan

The Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services was notified by the Office of Special Education Programs in April 2000 that Michigan had been selected as one of 16 states to begin the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process. By May, a core planning team of professional and support staff, led by the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services Director, began weekly meetings to plan and carry out activities necessary to conduct a statewide self-assessment and issue a report.

The primary role and function of the core planning team was to:

- ◆ create and implement the design strategy for Michigan's self-assessment,

- ◆ identify and acquire needed resources, and
- ◆ manage logistics of the process.

Design Strategy

The design strategy was based on several considerations. First, a broad range of stakeholder involvement was necessary to create linkages across systems and organizations.

Second, stakeholders would be required to make a considerable investment in the process. Therefore, criteria were needed to assist in the stakeholder selection process. Experience, knowledge, commitment and dedication to improving student performance were primary considerations. Willingness to participate fully in a team/group process and availability for the scheduled group meeting dates were also identified as selection criteria.

Third, the self-assessment would involve the use of a wide range of data. Stakeholders would need support in understanding the data and in determining application of the data analysis to federally identified components and indicators. Experts in data and analysis would be necessary to support stakeholder tasks.

Fourth, group process requires expert process facilitation. Facilitators with necessary group process expertise, including familiarity with the subject matter, and demonstrated lack of bias regarding the Michigan assessment were preferred.

Fifth, the sheer number of indicators to be assessed (150) would require a model of stakeholder involvement that would get the job done within the constraints of imposed time lines.

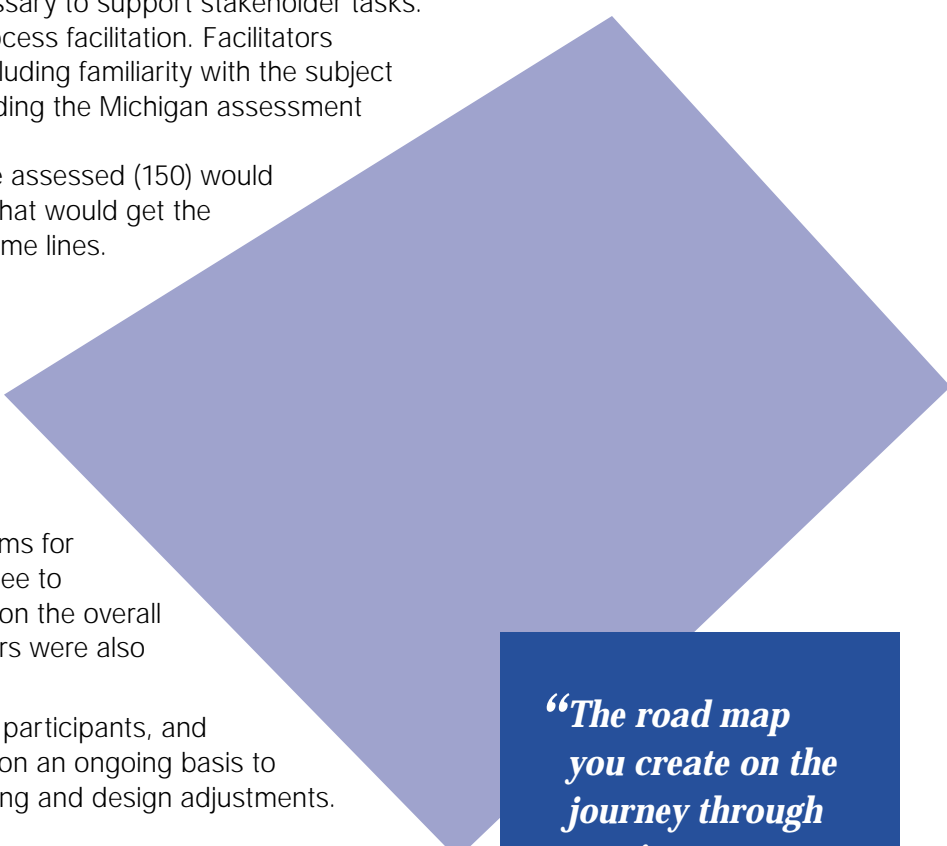
Thus, the design strategy included:

- ◆ a comprehensive approach to self-assessment to review all indicators and to use available data across all cluster areas for Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- ◆ a two-tiered approach of stakeholder involvement that created Assessment Teams for each cluster area and a Steering Committee to synthesize the analysis and provide input on the overall assessment. Steering Committee members were also members of the Assessment Teams; and
- ◆ process evaluation to gain feedback from participants, and observation data and facilitator feedback on an ongoing basis to inform decisions regarding process planning and design adjustments.

Resources and Logistics

To support the work of the Assessment Teams and incorporate the considerations listed above, these additional supports were implemented:

- ◆ staff from the Michigan Department of Education and partner agencies for *Early On* were assigned to each Assessment Team to serve as information resources and to support the work of the teams;
- ◆ support staff were assigned to each team to record work and support the facilitators;
- ◆ staff from statewide projects, which were sources of primary data, were secured to be available onsite for each meeting, and to provide assistance in understanding and analyzing the data; and



***“The road map
you create on the
journey through
continuous
improvement is
more important
than the actual
destination because
it’s always evolving
and challenging
your thinking.”***

—Cindy Anderson

- ◆ additional resource personnel, primarily faculty from institutions of higher education, were engaged to provide assistance to the teams in the data analysis and assessment process.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Assessment Teams and Steering Committee

The Michigan self-assessment utilized all federal indicators. Using a variety of resources, the core planning team developed a format for the indicator analysis. Resources included self-assessment reports from other states, technical assistance provided by the Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center, the Office of Special Education Programs Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process manual, and an Office of Special Education Programs sponsored Self-Assessment Institute

The assessment format included the following elements:

- ◆ data source,
- ◆ data analysis,
- ◆ strengths of the system based on the data,
- ◆ maintenance strategies,
- ◆ concerns about the system based on the data, and
- ◆ improvement strategies.

The Steering Committee further refined the analyses of the Assessment Teams. Additional data, including preliminary information from student focus groups, parent surveys, public meetings, staff validation, and other focused reports were presented and discussed.

The Steering Committee began to align the potential improvement strategies by defining broad areas of improvement needs, such as oversight; guidance and technical assistance; personnel development; and data collection, analysis and use.

The final activity of the Steering Committee was to participate, with Michigan Department of Education staff, in a conference call with Office of Special Education Programs staff. The Steering Committee members developed key points to include in the conference call and a subgroup interacted with the Office of Special Education Programs staff on behalf of the Committee.

Steering Committee members had electronic access to final drafts of the indicator and component analyses for comment prior to the publication of the final report. Several members did provide feedback during this review process; consideration of all feedback impacted the final report.

Staff Validation

Relevant Michigan Department of Education and interagency *Early On* staff reviewed the work of the teams for clarity and validity. Their inputs were shared with the Steering Committee in subsequent drafts of the indicator analyses.

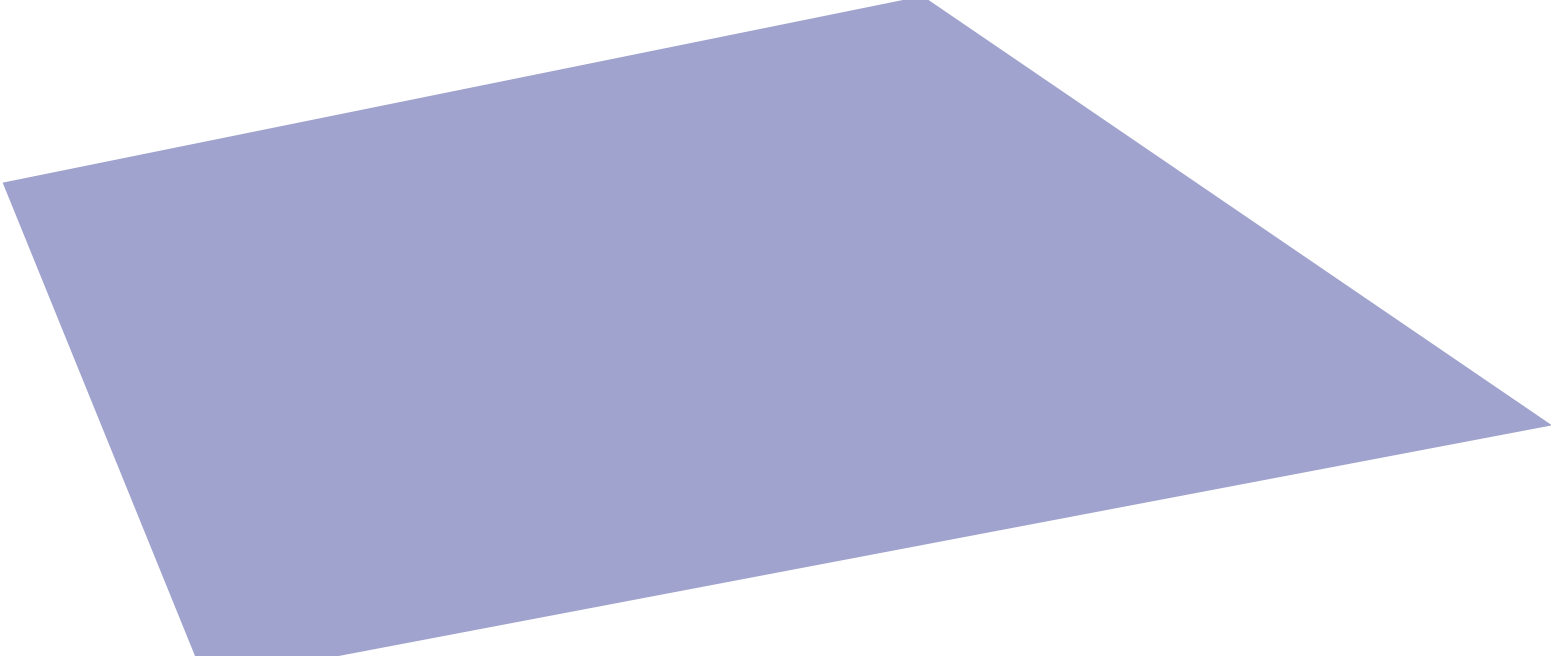
Staff also addressed implementation of regulatory components, applying data from both Parts B and C monitoring systems and reports, as well as basic data from complaints, hearings, and mediations.

TABLE 2
Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee
and Self-Assessment Teams

Steering Committee	Self-Assessment Team
ROLES	ROLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Present the views and perspectives of the stakeholder group(s) you are representing. ◆ Provide objective advice based on facts and reliable data. ◆ Be a partner with the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services and the Office of Special Education Programs to improve results for children with disabilities. ◆ Be flexible and a reflective listener. ◆ Assist the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services during each phase of the Office of Special Education Programs improvement process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Present the views and perspectives of the stakeholder group(s) you are representing. ◆ Provide objective advice based on facts and reliable data. ◆ Be a partner with the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services and the Office of Special Education Programs to improve results for children with disabilities. ◆ Be flexible and a reflective listener.
RESPONSIBILITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attend and fully participate in all meetings (at minimum, three of five meetings). Suggest additional data sources and coordinate data sources. ◆ Validate and analyze data provided. ◆ Complete the evaluation of the indicators in your assigned self-assessment team meetings. ◆ Keep track of specific issues on particular topics discussed in your assigned self-assessment team to share with the steering committee. ◆ Provide feedback for revisions to the self-assessment document. ◆ Provide recommendations regarding the priority areas of focus that result from the self-assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attend and fully participate in all self-assessment team meetings (at minimum two of three meetings). Suggest additional data sources and coordinate data sources. ◆ Validate and analyze data provided. ◆ Complete the evaluation of the indicators in your assigned self-assessment team meetings. ◆ Provide a summary of your findings about the status of the indicators evaluated by your assigned self-assessment team.

“Hard work goes far when hard work is applied to real problems that matter to real people (youth, families, and communities).”

—Sharon Murphy



“Through this process I’ve learned the importance of looking carefully at data, listening to others’ ideas, and learning about what Michigan can be.”

—Mary Donegan

Data Sources

Initially, staff and state project directors identified data sources. Quantitative data were accessed from federal reports such as the December 1 child count, personnel count, and other required reports. Data prepared for previous federal performance reports for Part B/special education and Part C/*Early On* were used. Additional data from statewide projects, such as the *Early On* Evaluation Project, were readily identified as pertinent to the effort.

Other data sources included qualitative information such as materials developed for outreach and early identification purposes, materials used for technical assistance and training, and documents developed as information resources for providers and families.

As new data sources were identified by Assessment Team members, they were reviewed by staff and/or committee members, culled for relevant data, and presented to the teams.

Data Analysis

Prior to convening the Assessment Teams, the core planning team, in conjunction with Michigan Department of Education staff, *Early On* interagency staff, and statewide project directors identified data sources, compiled data, and prepared data folders for each indicator. Data were presented to each Assessment Team by cluster, component, and indicator.

Experts in the use of data were assigned to each Assessment Team. In addition, primary source staff were available at each work session to further clarify issues as participants identified needs for assistance. Maintenance strategies were generated for systemic strengths, and preliminary improvement strategies were generated for systemic concerns.

Each team did a preliminary synthesis of the indicator analyses to bring forward component strengths and concerns. Summaries of this work were presented to the entire stakeholder group by each Assessment Team.

The Steering Committee continued the self-assessment process by integrating concerns and potential improvement strategies within aggregate themes. One of the prominent themes was the need to improve data collection and the use of subsequent data. Improvement strategies included:

- ◆ aligning data collection/variables across projects and agencies,

- ◆ increasing relevant data collection and analysis, and
- ◆ promoting use of data-based strategies throughout the delivery system.

Many student and family-centered improvement strategies were also generated as a result of the self-assessment. Future Steering Committee work will focus on improvement planning. In addition, improvement strategies relevant to compliance issues will be directed by the Office of Special Education Programs.

Gaps in Data

The Steering Committee identified a number of concerns regarding gaps in data. One of the important challenges for the Steering Committee in the improvement planning phase will be to determine which of the data gaps should be addressed.

Some data gaps that were apparent early in the self-assessment process included:

- ◆ lack of information from parents of children in the special education system, and
- ◆ lack of information from students in the special education system.

To address one gap, a statewide parent survey was developed. This one-page survey was customized for gathering information from Michigan parents, focusing on parent participation in their child's education, and parent satisfaction with their child's education. Preliminary results from this survey are used in the current self-assessment, as appropriate.

Another data gap, a lack of information from students, was addressed through the development of student focus groups. Site selection for a pilot initiative was made. Faculty from Western Michigan University involved in the Transition Services Project and researchers from Wayne State University involved in the *Early On* Program Evaluation Project worked with participants of the self-assessment to create this pilot. The preliminary findings are incorporated into the self-assessment, as appropriate.

Next Steps: Moving Toward Improvement Planning

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs will review the Michigan Self-Assessment Report and determine if further data collection is necessary. The Office of Special Education Programs may choose to visit Michigan and meet with the Steering Committee and staff of the Michigan Department of Education. It may be determined that additional data collection is necessary.

The Office of Special Education Programs will prepare a report to the State. The report will identify areas of strength and areas that require corrective action. The next step is improvement planning.

The Steering Committee will meet to draft a plan to address the issues identified in the federal report and those identified in the self-assessment. The draft improvement plan will include baseline data, expected results, evidence of

“This is hard work but gives direction to the system; I was amazed at how it all came together in the end!”

—Jean Garatt

change, and activities and resources to address the identified issues, as well as time lines for verification of improvement.

States are accountable for identifying weaknesses, determining and implementing strategies for improvement and measuring and reporting progress.

Any issue identified in the federal report as one of non-compliance must be addressed in the improvement plan. Other improvement strategies, for issues that are not identified as non-compliance, are encouraged, but not required. The draft improvement plan will be used to identify technical assistance needs that might be provided through Regional Resource Centers or through the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

The level of involvement by the Office of Special Education

Programs will vary, depending upon the needs of the State. The federal office will identify a date for submission of the improvement plan.

Balancing Accountability: Focus on Outcomes and Quality

Throughout the self-assessment process, the Assessment Teams and the Steering Committee consistently focused on outcomes for children and youth, and improving the quality of the delivery systems in Michigan. The participants supported a balanced system of accountability—one that has equal focus on child and student outcomes as well as compliance.

Key Elements of Cluster Areas

The organization of the self-assessment process and the structuring of stakeholder teams was driven by the cluster areas. Key elements of the cluster areas included:

General Supervision— Early On and Special Education

- ◆ State Education Agency/Lead Agency monitors to ensure compliance.
- ◆ Complaints are resolved in a timely manner.
- ◆ Disputes are resolved through mediation or due process hearings.
- ◆ Interagency agreements ensure services.
- ◆ Part C resources ensure timely delivery of services.

Public Awareness and Child Find—Early On

- ◆ Materials focus on early intervention.
- ◆ Physicians and hospitals are informed to make referrals.
- ◆ Materials include information about Child Find and Central Directory.
- ◆ Child Find is coordinated with other programs and services.
- ◆ Procedures for making referral are effective.
- ◆ Required time lines are ensured.
- ◆ A service coordinator is appointed as soon as possible after referral.

Family Centered Services—Early On

- ◆ Adequate notice is provided to families.
- ◆ Families participate in meetings.
- ◆ Periodic reviews are conducted in a timely manner.
- ◆ Decisions include:
 - family-directed identification of needs,
 - the opportunity to accept or decline any/all services,
 - services in natural environments/activity settings which are developmentally appropriate, and
 - transition to preschool is planned and supported.

Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments—Early On

- ◆ Children and family needs are identified.
- ◆ Children and families receive appropriate services.
- ◆ Services are provided in natural environments.
- ◆ Services are provided and supported by a variety of agencies, as appropriate.
- ◆ Qualified personnel provide appropriate services.
- ◆ Individualized family service plans are developed to identify services in natural environments.

Early Childhood Transition—Early On

- ◆ Transition Conference:
 - individualized family service plans contain planning for transition to preschool, as appropriate;
 - options are identified;
 - training is provided to parents; and
 - procedures are identified to prepare child for transition.

“When we work together and value views, we can create a much better learning environment for all.”

—Martha Wilson

***“Self-monitoring
is a valuable tool
for improving...”***

—Joan Ecclesine

Parent Involvement—Special Education

- ◆ Adequate notice is provided to families.
- ◆ Family participation in meetings is supported.
- ◆ Individual child progress reports are provided to parents.
- ◆ Parents participate in decisions about least restrictive environment.

FAPE in the LRE—Special Education

- ◆ Children receive needed services.
- ◆ Services are provided in the least restrictive environment.
- ◆ Qualified personnel conduct evaluations and provide services.
- ◆ Students with disabilities access the general curriculum.
- ◆ Individualized education program development leads to a free appropriate public education.
- ◆ Behavior issues are appropriately addressed.
- ◆ Children's needs are identified in the evaluation process.
- ◆ Student involvement in state and district-wide assessment is addressed appropriately.

Secondary Transition—Special Education

- ◆ The student participates in planning for transition.
- ◆ The individualized education program addresses transition needs.
- ◆ Participation in post-school activities increases.



Framework for Improvement Needs

The results of the self-assessment included the development of a framework for improvement needs. The framework includes four areas:

1. ***Oversight.*** The Michigan Department of Education has a critical role in ensuring that programs and services provided to infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities comply with federal and state regulations. The improvements needed in oversight include the following:
 - ◆ monitoring models that reflect the relationship between compliance, quality, and improved outcomes for children;
 - ◆ improving the detail of interagency agreements; and
 - ◆ increasing the frequency of monitoring in districts demonstrating high levels of noncompliance.
2. ***Guidance and Technical Assistance.*** The Michigan Department of Education has a responsibility to provide guidance and technical assistance to service areas, school districts and families. The self-assessment highlighted several improvements needed in this area:
 - ◆ expanding dissemination of information to all stakeholders;
 - ◆ providing clear operational definitions of key concepts;
 - ◆ promoting best practices and identifying model sites; and
 - ◆ providing technical assistance to increase collaboration.
3. ***Personnel Development.*** Continuing to develop and support the abilities of administrators, educators, service providers, and families to work with infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities is another responsibility of the Michigan Department of Education. Many specific personnel development improvement strategies were addressed in the self-assessment. These include:
 - ◆ providing personnel development to all stakeholders to support effective early childhood and secondary transition and to improve understanding of parent/student rights and responsibilities;

“Many different people with a variety of backgrounds and learning experiences can come together and be ‘team players’ in sharing one common goal, ‘to improve the quality of special education’... I truly believe we are headed in a positive direction. ”

—Deborah St. John

- ◆ providing training that supports the work of service coordinators, evaluators, and families;
- ◆ improving collaboration with colleges and universities;
- ◆ providing effective personnel development that meets the needs of general educators who have children and youth with disabilities in their classrooms and schools; and
- ◆ providing learning opportunities in multiple formats, including distance learning, and to address learning and social issues that impact children and youth with disabilities.

4. ***Data Collection, Analysis and Use.*** Data-based assessment of a state's performance in implementing and enforcing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements is a powerful tool for continuous improvement when focused on impacting the performance of children with disabilities. One of the prominent themes in Michigan's self-assessment was the need to improve data collection and to engage in data-based decision making. Improvement strategies included:

- ◆ Aligning data collection/variables across projects and agencies,
- ◆ Increasing relevant data collection and analysis, and
- ◆ Promoting use of data-based strategies throughout the delivery system.

New Data Strategies

Student Focus Groups

A series of focus groups with high school students who are receiving special education services were conducted. The purpose of the focus groups was to listen to students' experiences at their school with an emphasis on student participation in planning their individualized education program and transition services. The information gathered was used as part of the self-assessment.

Most students participating in the focus groups were positive about their education, especially their special education classes and teachers. The majority of students were involved in work or after-school activities. Most expected to pursue further education after high school. Some of the students had specific post-school goals, such as targeted job/career areas or post-school programs, although many did not. Based on student perceptions, it appears that the climate for special education students varied considerably often from school to school within an intermediate school district. The stigma felt by high schoolers receiving special education supports and services, and the need to increase the sensitivity of general education teachers to the needs of students with disabilities, was highlighted by the focus group information.

Statewide Parent Survey

A statewide parent survey was piloted as part of the self-assessment to provide broad-based parent input. The survey focused on parent involvement and satisfaction. The data collected were used as part of the self-assessment process.

Parent Involvement. Levels of parent involvement were most closely associated with the child's disability, educational setting and age. Parents responding to the survey reported that their school district involved them most in making decisions about their child, in planning and selecting goals and objectives for their child, helping plan their child's evaluation, and helping plan their child's education program. Parents reported being less involved in attending workshops/parent meetings sponsored by their child's school district.

Parents reported limited student involvement in planning and selecting goals and objectives for their own individualized education program.

The survey results suggest that more effort is needed to involve parents who have children with severe mental impairment and parents who have children who are educated in separate special education settings.

Parent Satisfaction. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with their child's experience, with 64 percent giving an overall letter grade of an "A" or "B." Parents reported their highest level of satisfaction with their child's opportunities to be with children without disabilities, the teachers and staff who work with their child, and their child's individualized education program. Parents were least satisfied with transition services and the training workshops/parent meetings they attended. Parental satisfaction was also associated with the child's disability, educational setting and age. The survey results highlight the need to target efforts to the parents of children with emotional impairments and severe mental impairments, as well as to parents who have children 14 to 18 years of age and parents of children receiving education in separate special education settings.

There was a positive association between level of parental involvement and parental satisfaction—the more involved the parent was in their child's educational experience, the higher the letter grade they gave for overall satisfaction. This highlights the importance of efforts aimed at involving families in their child's educational experience.

Public Meetings

As part of the self-assessment process, 12 public meetings were held around the state. The purpose of the meetings was to gather information from stakeholders to validate the self-assessment findings and to provide more information from stakeholders.

Major findings across Part C and Part B:

- ◆ Access to information is a major concern statewide across stakeholder groups.
- ◆ The training component most requested—regardless of target audience—is information dissemination.
- ◆ System-wide accountability and oversight is a concern.
- ◆ A more effective support system for parents of children with disabilities is needed, including parent-to-parent support.
- ◆ There is a service gap for children aged 3–5 and also for youth that have reached age 18.

“Collective, diverse thinking can lead to powerful change for the system.”

—Pam Mish

Evaluation of Michigan Self-Assessment Process

The self-assessment process outlined by the United States Department of Education provides states with a unique opportunity to examine the delivery of services to infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. The Michigan Department of Education welcomed this opportunity and conducted a self-assessment that will impact quality and make a difference in the lives of Michigan's children.

Michigan stakeholders were committed, eager to contribute, and open to learning from each other. Thoughtful design of the self-assessment process itself resulted in a high level of openness and energy. Participants felt that they learned a tremendous amount about the role of the Michigan Department of Education in the delivery of early intervention and special education services. The work of each self-assessment team was supported by data experts, access to technical assistance as needed, and skilled facilitation. A vast array of data sources were provided to assist teams in drawing conclusions. These included data from schools and early intervention providers, information from statewide projects, information from parents and advocacy groups and survey and focus group data. Participants also learned from each other—the diversity of perspectives and experiences embedded in each self-assessment team resulted in a process that expanded everyone's thinking and understanding.

The importance of moving forward, while still valuing our past accomplishments, is key to the improvement process. Michigan has much to be proud of—and welcomes the opportunity to engage in continuous improvement.

Michigan State Board of Education

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STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

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